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THE DREAM

OF

THE WESTERN SHEPHERD.

BY MRS LECKIE,

Authoress of "The Village School," "The Hebrew Boy," &c.

"Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a Shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him, he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it."—*Vision of Mirzah.*

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TO

MISS JOHNSON

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED, WITH MOST AFFECTIONATE FRIENDSHIP,

BY THE AUTHOR.

4, Stafford Street, Edinburgh.

917996

A superstitious belief in fairies and witchcraft still lurks in the Western Highlands of Scotland, the result of ignorance, and want of education. The following Poem was written in consequence of hearing that a countryman of those parts, having been at a christening at his chieftain's house, did not return to his home. His friends sought him with lighted sticks during the night. They found him next morning wandering; when he told them "the fairies had carried him into the sea." He was not well for some time; but he was a person of sober habits.

THE DREAM

OF

THE WESTERN SHEPHERD.

Canto First.

The gale was hushed: the sea was smooth,
The moonbeam slept on the waveless tide;
The Shepherd sought the lonely shore,
When wandering from the mountain side.

He lingered not in the shadowy vale,
He shunned the haunted cavern's gloom;
Nor paused to scan yon ruined fane,
Where glide the spectres of the tomb.

The shell and pebble glittering shone
In mirror depths of lovely blue;
So soft the rippling water flowed,
Like life's young spring-tide,—oft untrue!—

From the calm, azure sea, and near,
So sweetly rose a heavenly strain,
The tone seraphic charmed the ear,
As if all Eden lived again.——

A pearly car rose from the deep,
On radiant dolphins lightly borne;
Their scales of crimson and of gold
Like gorgeous summer eve, or morn.

A perfume, as from Hyacinth bell,
Breathed sweeter far than Arab wind;
And nestled in the beauteous shell
A tender fairy form reclined.

Her snowy arms embraced a lyre,
Her golden locks hung o'er the strings;
And while the trembling chords respire,
In melody's soft note, she sings,—

"Come o'er the silver wave,
Child of the mountain!
Come, view the fairy's cave,
Far 'neath the fountain!

"The sea-star shall point thy way,
Bird of the mountain!
Bright gleams fair Cynthia's ray,
Far 'neath the fountain!

"Halcyone hovers there,
Son of the mountain!
Unfading the rainbow there,
Far 'neath the fountain!

"Brightest gems sparkle there,
Child of the mountain!
Coral trees blushing fair,
Far 'neath the fountain!

"Come o'er the azure wave,
Bird of the mountain!
Come, see our beauteous cave,
Far 'neath the fountain!"

Entranced, the listening Shepherd gazed,
Spellbound, he reached the glittering car,
While gently soft the zephyrs sighed,
And waft him from his fields afar.

They passed Iona's sacred isle,
They float near Staffa's wondrous cave;
Where frown the mountains of Argyle,
They slowly sunk beneath the wave.

A lofty hall received them. High o'er arched
With coral and with stalactite enriched,
Interminable vistas far were seen
In gay perspective. Marble fountains play,

And gardens, too, were there of solemn shade,
Sweet jasmin wreaths hung clustering to the wall,
And hid the garish light which might obtrusive fall.

But no descriptive pen, or pencil true,
Could paint the splendour of their tropic skies.
Nor would the brightest Greek or Roman fane
Rival this ocean temple. Dazzling gems,
And frostwork here combined its diamond sprays.
The massive pillars rising to the roof,
High in gigantic, Theban grandeur sprung;
Their prism points reflecting every light
Of rainbow hue. Nor had the hand of Time
Defaced their polished wreaths, or dimmed their matchless shine.

The extensive gardens bloomed on every side,
Where Nature reigned uncurbed, luxuriant, wild;
Each fragrant shrub was there of Indian soil,
With those that breathe their sweets on Afric's shore;
While flowers of every clime, and every hue,
Courted the gathering hand, and still renewing grew.

Each bird was there whose note delights the ear,
Warbling in Scotia's loved, romantic vales;
The nightingale's soft lay of love they hear,
First songster of fair England's loveliest dales,
And oft the mermaid's dulcet, mournful song

The wondering fairy's soul entranced, beguiled;
While tears of tender rapture gently flow,
To list those notes so sad, so sweetly, strangely wild!

"Weep for Iona's loveliest child!
Weep for Iona's childless sire!"
Thus blended sweet the mermaid's lay,
In mingled tones of song and lyre.

"Weep for Iona's beauteous maid!
Weep for Iona's fairest daughter!—
Our rainbow dove of peace and joy,
Who died beneath yon stormy water!"

Iona's chieftain reared the maid,
Her playful childhood blest his arms;
And rising beauty's tints displayed
The dawn of bright, meridian charms.

The brave young Ronald's love had sought
And won this fair, this tender flower.
Paternal promise soon was gained
To give her hand in Hymen's hour.

Fierce Malcolm ruled a neighbouring isle.
A robber in a pirate's tower,
The dread, the scourge of peaceful vale,
Of quiet home, and lordly bower.

He wished to wed Iona's child;
His suit refused,—his gloomy pride
Determined, with revengeful ire,
To blast those hopes, to him denied.——

His frequent havoc roused at length
A wish to burn this scorpion's nest.
Iona's chief, and Ronald brave,
Tamed and subdued his haughty crest.

A friendly isle received the maid
Till past the fear of Malcolm's power.
When checked, destroyed, his cruel raid,
She sought again her native tower.

The lover came with chosen band
To guard from harm his gentle bride.
The slender bark, with silvery sail,
Skims with light course the sparkling tide.

A skiff concealed by lofty cave,
Darts with a tiger's dreadful aim!
O'erwhelming force compelled the brave
To feel resistance was in vain!

He fell!—The maid in wild despair,
In terror of the savage crew,
Deep in the sheltering watery grave,
With rapid plunge, herself she threw!——

Her father watched upon the shore
To hail his much loved child's return.
Her bier, a rolling wave soon bore
Close to his feet, her mangled form!

Weep! sad Iona's plaintive lyre!
Weep thine Iona's peerless daughter!
Weep for the childless, aged sire,
Whose grave looks o'er yon stormy water!

Canto Second.

Within those Alabaster halls and bowers
Such Ariels move, in forms of heaven portrayed,
As mock the painter or the sculptor's powers
To catch one line their Psychean charms displayed,
While airy Sprites and Peris like wreathed flowers
Sported in childhood's dawn. Their rosy wings
Or plumes cerulean, fanned the ambient air,
And beauty of all shades, the fair, the brown,
Graced those enchanting courts with magic all their own.—

When calm, serene, the cloudless eve appeared,
And the smooth turf in silvery moonlight shone,
Those fairy bands in mazy, circling dance,
Their sylph-like forms in dazzling chains entwined.
Then all the power, the grace, the charm of motion,
In living beauty reigned.—
Their noiseless steps light as new falling snow,
And soft as echo to the softest music,
Glide o'er the lawn in solemn heathen measure,
Or gay as Dian's nymphs on Grecian plain.

While harps unseen were heard, whose tender tones
Float on the summer breath like airs from heaven.—
The night-flowers gave their perfume. Brilliant shone
The radiant, sparkling grove, with fire illumined wings.——

How pure, how sweet, the blush of early morn,
In those blest fairy realms of tropic clime!
Those bowers, those meads of roses, where the sense
Revels in fragrant beauty. Then to watch
The bird, the insect's tender, lovely form,
Their wings of downy crimson, gold or sapphire;
And see them sip the nectar from the flowers.—

A sable race was happy, wandering there.—

Magnificent as deepest, darkest night;
Rich in expression's high and varied tone;
In Grecian features faultless outline bright,
Like black and sculptured marble statues, shone.

Sometimes they sauntered, thoughtful, musing, lone,
Amidst high terraces of lofty palms,
Whose straight and slender stems, like minster aisles,
O'ershadow with their broad enwoven heads
The vistas seen beneath. A placid lake
Reflected deep their forms. Its gentle breast
Sheltered the azure and the snowy lotus.—

In scenes like these, which pictured Niger's shore,
This Ethiop race delighted to recline.—
Oft in the solemn eve, from the deep woods,
Their clashing cymbals brave, inspiring note,
Awoke the slumbering echo.—
And the lone pathos of the muffled drum,
The last sad honour o'er the soldier's grave,
Rolled on the breeze like distant muttering thunder.
The trembling flutes, with sweet melodious lay,
Breathed a soft requiem; such as in fancy's ear
Sighed o'er the tomb of Israel's haughty chief;—
Th' undaunted hero:—he who nobly scorned
To live one hour beyond his vanquished bands;
Or see his slaughtered children fall around him
On Gilboa's blood-stained hill.——

In vain the promised aid of Pythic art;
In vain the threatening of the shrouded Shade;
And last, not least, the agonizing pang,
The gloom of frenzy's dark appalling hour,
To warn him from the battle!——

A change of measure now the listener caught,
A low recitative, with simple viol.
Such as in Bagdad's courts, or Cairo's halls,
Relieved the toil, refreshed the wearied powers
Of Haroun's active mind. Th' amusing tales
Which charmed *his* ear, and still delight our own,
Arrest those groups.——

Untired they hear. Untired the poet sings.
While in true Eastern, allegoric numbers,
He paints, as to their eyes, each deed, each form;
Commanding, as he lists, the souls of all around.—

He spoke in language graphic, energetic;
Well suited to the land his verse portrayed.
That land whose mighty fanes, gigantic halls,
Though now in crumbling ruin lowly laid;
Those matchless sculptured temples once enshrined
All that succeeding time can ever claim
Of learning or of art, far boasted o'er the main.

Their creed symbolic, palpable to sight,
Embodied Nature's ever varying form;—
But th' enlightened mind could clearly trace
One First Great Cause, in all their sages taught,
Though veiled in mystic terms, and darkly hid.—
His attributes, His power, personified in all.—

And now the poet wakes the Theban harp.—

"The golden, cloudless, ray of heaven,
Illumes the sad, the mighty tomb.
The Titan shrine, in ruin riven,
No worship claims from Egypt's son.

Where once the guardian Sphinx reposed,
In calm, expressive, silent power,

And where, if grandeur, strength, or fame,
Might hope to reach time's latest hour;

There, clay-built hovels stain, deface,
On Luxor's soil, the sacred shore;
There, amidst Karnac's squalid race,
Instruction, science, reign no more.

Now the fell despot's savage will,
Aids the dark whirlwind's wasting sway.—
In granite halls, where Wisdom ruled,
The fierce hyæna shuns the day.—

While lingering 'midst those broken walls,
Those sad remains of art declined,
A band of fettered slaves recalls
To deeper pain the wandering mind.

One pair I marked of nobler mien,
Of feature high, above the rest;
Their greater anguish seemed to claim
A heartfelt interest, unexpressed.

In Arab tents their youth was reared;
Secure they roamed at freedom's will;
Where burning suns the passions wake
To marked extremes of good or ill.—

Her hands were crossed upon that breast,
A snowy tunic's folds adorn;
The ringlets parted on her brow,
Waved round her dark, her graceful form.

The youth who near beside her stood,
In Moslem calm suppressed all pain,
Till trembling now for her, he knelt
To him whose fiat fixed their chain.

"I know 'tis vain to sue, to kneel
For freedom from thy stern decree;
I only ask to share with her
The fate thy will may doom to me.

If blest with her, I'll bear through life
Whate'er the worst your slaves may call;
Let me but guard my own, my wife,
Oppression's chain will slightly gall.

Who humbly bows at Mecca's shrine,
Thy law commands thee to revere.
Thy savage hordes, inured to crime,
By force and fraud have dragged me here."——

"No! thou to Stamboul's mart shall haste.
In Cairo's halls she shall abide.
That life my will can give or take,
Will soon subdue thy sullen pride."——

The youth arose.—He murmured low;
His accents scarce a whisper seemed;
"Great Allah, judge this deed!"—he prayed,
Then quick as light his dagger gleamed!—

With rapid force, unerring speed,
While mute despair his brow confessed,
His desperate hand the poniard plunged
Deep in his Zamba's tender breast!—

She sunk, she died within his arms.
He looked in triumph at his foe;
"Your chains, your whips, your pangs I scorn,
My soul is steel'd 'gainst weal or woe!—

"Give slavery, death with cruelest art;
This fettered hand hath set *her* free!
No more thy tortures wring that heart,
That heart which lived for love and me!"—

Canto Third.

But though Ideal Beauty's magic power
Invests those Eden shades with hues of Heaven;
Though every charm the senses could inhale,
Disposed to peace, and rest, and purest joy;
Yet nought of listless languor there was seen,
Or vacant ease to sap the strength of mind;
No lazy, idle wight was there, I ween,
To poison useful aim with deadening snare;
Idless! the moral death of all that's good and fair!—

Some love to search great Nature's countless store
In field or mountain. Others watch the heavens,
The planetary glories of the sphere.—
Some dive beneath the ocean. Others choose
To search the riches of the deepest mine.
Whate'er refines, exalts, or interest wakes
In man's improving nature, there was sought,
And blest those sons and daughters, void of care.—
O'er active, healthful minds no evil lours.
How oft is misery caused by idle, wasted hours!

And sometimes o'er this fair and gorgeous scene,
Darkness sublime her mantle's shade has thrown;
When Cynthia's lamp withdrawn, the stars alone,
Or Borealis bright supplied her beam.
Then those light fairy forms transparent gleam,
Like spectre shades 'midst lone cathedral walls;
And the forked lightning's grand, but death-arm'd glare,
Illumed the brilliant, dazzling silvery halls;
While tenfold gloom's alternate contrast gave
A dreadful beauty to its serpent dart.
Then swelled the organ-peal, the surges roar,
Like storm of wintry night on wide Atlantic shore.—

Oft a harmonious band was heard,
Like inspiration's highest strain;
Such music breathed,—th' Olympic bard
Would deem his spirit lived again!

In converse, song, or lyre's wild dream,
Oft passed the pure, the placid hour;
Or contemplation's sacred theme
Awoke their being's loftiest power.

A higher boon to some was given,
The happiest gift to them assigned,
Creative fancy's power, to charm
With magic skill th' admiring mind!

A Lethean calm, with gentle wand,
To mortal sorrow they impart;

With visions bright, etherial, bland,
They soothe the suffering, bleeding heart.

Now glorious beams of rising day,
Crested with fire the hills of Arran,
When sunk in sleep a shepherd lay
Reclined beside an aged cairn.

He woke! he gazed upon the sea!
He sighed to think such dream was gone!—
His step retraced the dewy lea,
And sought his lowly cottage home.

A SELECTION

OF

VERSES FOR MUSIC.

BY MRS LECKIE.

TO

LORD COCKBURN

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH RESPECT,

BY THE AUTHOR.

A SELECTION

OF

VERSES FOR MUSIC.

To the Tune of—"The Last Time I came o'er the Muir."

[From "The Power of Conscience."]

High on the stormy cliff sublime,
The Bard will watch the tempest nigh,
And gazing view the raging main
With sadly mild, and mournful eye:—

So, undismayed by Fortune's scorn
The Sage beholds Life's threatening sky;
And calmly great amidst the storm,
Fears not to live, nor dreads to die!—

To the Tune of—"The Bush aboon Traquair."

[From the Same.]

Hard as yon gloomy portal's wall,
Relentless as yon rocky bound,

Is he, who deaf to misery's call
Now rules as lord of all around.

Does ocean shroud my orphan's form?
Say, does the sea-cave hold my child?
Hid from the fierce Atlantic storm,
Or water spirit screaming wild?—

Say, does he tread forlorn, beguiled,
The wide savannah's burning soil?
Or shrinking dreads in forest wild,
The ravenous serpent's deadly coil?

Oh! hear a wretched suppliant's cry!
Oh! hear a widow'd mother's moan!
And list the mourner's plaintive sigh,
Who kneeling thus demands her son!

[From the Same.]

Lightly the shadows stray
O'er the green mountain.
Gemmed in the sunny ray
Sparkles the fountain.

See the young lambs at play,
Blithe as hope's morrow!
Such our youth's early day,
Careless of sorrow!—

Scion of love and joy,
Lost in an hour!

Why did cruel fate destroy
Life's fairest flower!

Still in thine angel form,
Lisp tender numbers!
Still with Heaven's sweetest hymn
Bless my soft slumbers!

[From the Hebrew Boy.]

Bright star of heaven, whose cheering ray
Can glad the captive's tedious year,
And point the eagle's glorious way,
Or insect's path, gay, fluttering near!

Yet vain, alas! to me thy ray,
Thus quenched in darkest, deepest night;
Oh! then, bright intellectual day,
Impart thy higher, moral light!

Now lost to me each lovely scene
Of pensive eve, or early morn;
No Cynthia's tender, softer beam,
To these sad eyes can e'er return!

Yet to the mind's undying eye,
Creation's beauteous realm extends.
No tearful film can e'er destroy
The light that from high heaven descends.

Scion of Judah's regal line!
What hope, what fear, for thee combine!

Loved child of him for whom the tear yet swells,
Young minstrel of the high, prophetic lay!
Thy dawn, thy beauteous morning star foretels
The brighter promise of thy perfect day!—

[From the Chorus in the Same.]

Oh Lady! turn a gentle ear,
And list thy people's plaintive sigh;
Nor stern deny the tender tear
That fairest shines in beauty's eye!

Though rich those pastoral mountains swell,
Far dearer Gilboa's mournful hill!
Though deep their stream's unfailing well,
Far lovelier Jordan's sacred rill!

No more the prophet proud beholds
A thousand tents the vale adorn;
Nor sees the trembling foe, aghast,
The couching Lion's fearful form!—

Now sad Palestia views dismayed
A desert where the harvest smiled;
And where the flock and shepherd strayed,
The fierce hyæna finds a wild.

Oh! could her sons the tyrant spurn,
And free the children of her soil!
That high reward would full return
The patriot's aim—The patriot's toil!

The fragrant Rose of Sharon's sweet perfume
Would breathe where now the stony valleys spread.
The vine, the olive, beauteous, richly bloom,
Where now the arid thistle rears its head.

Though sunk in tears, in grief, in woe,
Though bound in captive chains, and low.
Still does our heart, our bosom glow;
We hail our star that will return
Through dark, through deathlike gloom!

Then quench'd the torch of vengeful ire,
And bright in day's meridian fire,
While cloudless beam
Fair Zion's skies!
Our foes shall see their hope expire,
Our tribes shall wake the choral lyre,
Sacred to all,
Blest Salem, rise!

The Vision.

[From the Hebrew Boy.]

Now has the burning noontide power
Declined to softer, sweeter night;
And bathed in dew, each tender flower
Expands the charms that shun the light.

Fairest in heaven's resplendent arch,
The moon her beauteous orb displays;
And silence reigns, and fancy loves
To dream of past eventful days.

Lo! forth from Alhambra's portal wide,
What shadowy forms in martial lines!
With banners waving, warriors ride,
And high the Crescent o'er them shines!

In turbaned pride and gemmed cymar,
With burnished arms, how fierce, how bright!
Eager they seek the Christian war,
To conquer or to die in fight!—

The shades have passed! What plaintive wail,
Does midnight hear? What shrieks of woe!
What funeral dirge sighs in the vale,
And hopeless weeps the Crescent low!

Sad ruin frowns within the walls
Where once the marble fountain played;
The bat usurps those splendid halls
Where once the beauteous harem swayed!

[From the Same.]

Star of lost Israel's sacred hill,
I hail thee Zion from afar!
Thy exiled, weeping children still,
Still look to thee, their guide, their star!

Yet does the harp with dying strain
Respond our sad, our mournful tone!
Still as of old on Shinar's plain,
It echos back the captive's moan.

Shall e'er that morning gild our land
When bright in Syria's glorious ray,
Thy children in thy courts shall stand,
And bless their father's sacred clay?

Eternal Justice yet shall rise
To guard our right, our race, our reign;
And nations round with joyful eyes
Shall see lost Zion live again!——

[From the Stepmother.]

Should joy light thy rosy smile,
Sweet girl, believe me,
Thy bliss would my care beguile,
Why, then, thus leave me?

When grief wrings thy tender heart,
O! still believe me!
No charm could then tempt to part;
Could I deceive thee?

Thy love, in soft infancy
Cradled me near thee;
Thy song, my youth's early sigh
Lulls, when I hear thee!——

In life be our joys the same,
Happy, when near thee!
In death may one grave contain,
Then thou'lt ne'er leave me!——

[From the Same.]

Sweet sister! turn thy gentle ear
That ne'er was deaf to misery's call!
Oh! list poor Lionel's humble prayer,
Who rests on thee, his Guard, his All!

Oh! save me from their cruel scorn!
From the fierce Stepdame's iron power,
Who threats to dash my feeble form
From the dread sea rock's beetling Tower!

For thee I'll find the loveliest gems
That sparkle near great ocean's bed;
I'll cull sweet buds with tender stems
To grace thy bower, or deck thy head!

[From the Same.]

As the far wandering Pilgrim burns,
And hails his home of promised rest,
The rainbow Dove of Peace returns,
And nestles in my sheltering breast.

Auspicious Hope shall bring the morn,
The rosy hours shall lead the day,
Which though obscured by midnight storm,
Through tempests darts the heavenly ray.

[From the Same.]

Caught in the hunter's deadly snare,
  See the fell She-wolf's dying pangs;
The lamb, the kid now sportive share
  The verdant mead, nor dread her fangs!

Th' unerring bolt hath swiftly pierced
  The Eagle pouncing from above;
The trembling, tender Dove now hears
  Her rescued mate's soft note of love!

Though wildest storms of thunder crush
  This gloomy Castle's haughty Head,
The beauteous dawn again shall blush,
  And bless the shepherd's lowly shed.

Chorus of Shades.

[From the Stepmother.]

First Shade.

Prepare the shroud, the pall, the bier;
The King of Terrors rears on high
His dart to strike!—I see him near!
I hear her gasping, struggling sigh!—

Second Shade.

Inclosed within Cyclopean walls,
Thy feeble moan shall bring no aid!

The gale, the storm, the thunder's voice
Shall drown thy cries, till life itself is fled!

Third Shade.

Like Fury's hiss
The surge's lash
Shall laugh to scorn
Thy pangs, thy woe!
And late remorse
With rankling tooth
Shall aid fierce famine's deadly throe.

Fourth Shade.

A cup filled with the orphan's tears
Shall mock her lip:—her vain grasp tire!
No dew from heaven; no stream shall quench
Her parching fever's burning fire!

Fifth Shade.

I come from Ocean's caverned gloom
To hail Thee, Tenant of the Tomb,
Whose hand hath cut, before my time,
My thread of life, in early prime,
While yet that life was May!

No husband shall with love, though vain,
Support thy head, and lull thy pain,
And stop the arrest of Death!
No child, with anxious, soothing part,
Shall watch with mourning, bleeding heart,
To catch thy latest breath!—

Come! haste, and join the Dance of Death!

Behold the Shades in dread array!
They shun the glare of garish day,

They haunt night's blackest noon!
List!—hear their whisper's voiceless "Hush!"—
They fly the light, the morning blush;
In myriads see! grim Spectres gleam!
They love no cheering, gladdening beam!

ALL.

No hand can stay Thy doom!
Or save from Death's tremendous power;
Thy doom is fix'd This Fatal Hour!—
ALL HASTEN TO THE TOMB!

[From the Guardian.]

Though struck by death's resistless power,
The Great lay low,—the blest by all,
Their fame survives till time's last hour,
When burning worlds in ruin fall.

A nation's tears bedew their grave,
Her sighs like incense rise to heaven;
She points to her historic page,
Where live their deeds, in bright example given.

Their names on adamantine rock engraved;
In characters of fire, immortal shine;
While round the image of each sacred shade,
The laurel and the mourning cypress twine.

Chorus from the Guardian.

Hail to thee, Flora! Queen of flowers!
Thy gifts how bounteous, rich, and fair!
Their beauty decks our summer bowers,
Their fragrant breath perfumes the air!

The nectar cups that feed the bee,
Where scented Woodbines graceful twine,
The snowy blossom of the tree,
The tender clover buds are thine!

Thy fruits refresh the weary lip;
Thy plants assuage all torturing pain,
Thy shrubs with softest down enwrap
The dark-eyed tribes of Asia's plain.

Accept our gift upon thy shrine,
The altar of our Northern clime;
Nor scorn the wreath, though poor the bloom
Compared to those that richly braid
Thy temples with frankincense, paid
Beneath the burning line!

Crown with a never-fading flower
Our favourite Fair;—and bless her bower
With joy's resplendent rays!
On this auspicious, happy morn,
Oh! be her wreath an emblem worn
Of sweet content, and peaceful days;
A rose without a thorn!

While airs of heaven around thee breathe,
And roses on thy path are spread,
Soon may the bridal myrtle wreath,
Sweet Clifford! deck thy beauteous head!

The woods are mine,—the groves of oak,
That guard our Isle, in strength arrayed,
The acorn branch that binds my brows
Proclaims the God who rules their shade.

Who, at the sight of merry, dancing Pan,
E'er from his mellow pipe, or beauty ran?

The Pilgrim's Song.

[From the Guardian.]

I've sought 'midst emerald meads and bowers,
Where mightiest Amazonia strays;
I've seen the fount, where decked with flowers
The infant Orinoca plays.

Through peaceful fields, where weeps the dew,
I've roamed, while fragrant zephyr sighed,
Where fell Pizarro ruthless slew
The chiefs who for their country died!

I've climbed the steep where whirlwinds reign,
Loud, threatening Ocean's deepest well;

And where, in sight's unbounded main,
Remotest regions seem to dwell.

Th' eternal snows I loved to seek
That shroud the rocks, by earthquakes torn;
I've reached the high volcanic peak,
Whose midnight fires illume the storm.

Now in sweet Cambria's loveliest vale,
On Conway's bank I'll lay me low;—
Shade of the bard!—thy deathless lyre
Still seems to mourn her Cambria's woe!

For thee, young floweret! tender, fair,
How bright thy star! serenely mild!
A radiant angel's watchful care
Will shield from wrong the orphan child!

And as yon orb, with heavenly ray,
'Midst beams of glory seeks the west,
So, honoured in life's closing day,
The parent's hoary head shall rest!

To the Tune of—"God save the King."

[From the Guisarts, in "The Village School."]

Strike the bold harp again,
Loud let its chords proclaim
Britons are free!—
High o'er the rolling main,
Joy shall exalt the strain,

Slaves now have rent their chain,
Britons are free!

Oh! may each bliss extend
Wide o'er our happy land,
First of the free!
Brave in the battle hour,
Firm as a rock thy power,
Ne'er shall fate o'er thee lower,
Britain, while free!

Still great and glorious shine,
Bright as the sun, thy line,
Britain, when free!
Oh! may thy noble heart
Still spurn the tyrant's chain,
Quell proud oppression's power,
Die, or be free!

To the Tune of—"Maggy Lauder."

[From the Guisarts.]

While stand the ramparts of our Isle,
Her rocks, the ocean bounding,
If blest with Freedom's guardian smile,
Let hymns of joy be sounding.

But plant the standard of the Free,
Should danger's frown alarm us;
Our sacred right, our liberty,
With dauntless power shall arm us!

Behold! the eagle soaring flies
Through clouds resplendent, burning!
Nor bends on earth his quenchless eyes,
To heaven's bright day-star turning!

So strong, so brave in purpose high,
The soul with Freedom warming,
In glory's track looks to the sky,
And scorns all fear alarming!

TO THE TUNE OF—"JOHNNY MACGILL."

While far on the ocean my sailor is gone,
And swift glides the bark o'er the wide rolling sea,
While danger is arming, and tempests alarming,
The spring is unlovely,—it blooms not for me!

Now cheerless I fly from the dance, from the revel,
At even I lilt my sad note on the hill;—
'Midst jeerin' and sneerin', wi' grief my heart tearin',
Oh! nane looked sae kindly as Johnny MacGill!

Though dark frowns the eve o'er the deep gloomy vale,
And sadly I trace my lone path on the lea,
Yet sweet comes the dawning, all beauty recalling,
The sun to the valley,—my Johnny to me!—

As the exile returning from sorrow, from mourning,
In joy and in tears views the loved native hill,
And hails the bright morning, all nature adorning,
So, welcome to Mary, her Johnny MacGill!

The Swiss Flower Girl.

[From "Stories for the Young."]

While life beams in joy like the ray of the morning,
And youth like the flower blooming fair in the dell,
Ah! pity the helpless, the orphan, the stranger,
Now far from her home, the lov'd mountains of Tell!

My lilies breathe sweet in the dew of the evening,
How fragrant the violet! how fresh the bluebell!
Buy a rose from the Orphan,—give aid to the friendless,
Who sighs for her home, the bright mountains of Tell!

Oh! fairest of all is the land of my fathers!
There the brave and the free ever happily dwell!
How blest my return to the hut of my childhood,
To the home of my heart, 'midst the mountains of Tell!

And when from your Island the pilgrim shall wander
To the high sunny Alps that encircle our dell,
Enraptured I'll point to the cliffs, to the valleys,
"See! the Land of my Sires, the free mountains of Tell!"

The Fairy's Song.

[From the Village School.]

Come to thy golden bower,
Maid of the Mountain!
Sweet bud of Beauty's Flower,
Fresh from the fountain!

Soft be thy nightly dream
Lulled by sweet numbers!
Peaceful thy bosom
Like infancy's slumbers!

Roses shall bloom o'er thee,
Music shall charm thee!
Selim shall watch o'er thee!
Nought shall alarm thee!——

To the Tune of—"Jockey to the Fair."

[From the Village School.]

As down the glen I chanced to rove,
A Shepherd mourned his absent love,
With plaintive song, or trembling reed,
He sought to lull his pain.———
The tender lambs lay listening near,
The music of his voice to hear;
The lark, sweet minstrel! sings above,
From heaven descends his song of love;
The mournful dove replies;
In tears of dew the flowerets weep,
And echo sadly sighs.

The Shepherd sung, "Oh! come, sweet maid!
Why lingering thus? why thus afraid?
All nature decks the verdant glade,
And blooms to welcome thee!———
The redbreast here shall guard his nest,
His strain shall soothe thy pensive breast;
The rose shall blush while thou art here,
Sweet buds all fragrance breathing near
Shall woo, shall charm thy stay;
And love and joy entreat thine ear
To list thy Shepherd's Lay."———

THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE

POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

BY

MRS LECKIE,

AUTHORESS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL,

AND STORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

EDINBURGH:

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M,DCCC.XLI.

TO

MRS JOANNA BAILLIE,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, 4, STAFFORD STREET.

CHARACTERS.

REGINALD.

AUGUSTA, his Niece.

PHILIP, his Steward.

ALYNE, Daughter of Philip.

HUBERT, a Shepherd Boy, Son of Philip.

ALZIRE, a Mulatto Woman.

Group of Villagers.

Scene in Scotland.

THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.— *The front of an old baronial mansion, of the Gothic form, with an avenue of trees. Mountains at a distance. Evening.*

Augusta enters, in deep mourning, and sings.

Hard as yon gloomy portal wall,
Relentless as yon rocky bound,
Is he, who, deaf to misery's call,
Now rules as lord of all around!

Enter Reginald.

Augusta again sings.

Does ocean shroud my orphan's form?
Say, does the sea-cave hold my child?
Hid from the fierce Atlantic storm,
And Water Spirit screaming wild!

Say, does he tread, forlorn, beguiled,
The wide savannah's burning soil?
Or, shrinking, dreads in forest wild
The ravenous serpent's deadly coil?

Oh! hear a wretched suppliant's cry!
Oh! hear a widowed mother's moan!
And list the mourner's plaintive sigh,
Who, kneeling, thus demands her son!

REGINALD. Will thy unceasing clamour never tire
Thus to disturb my peace?—Thy father's dead,
And thou at liberty to go where'er
Thou listest.—Hence!—Search for thy child;
Stolen from thy care he was, but not by me.
I know not where he is.—But mark my words,
If with thy rash and most unjust suspicion,
Thou thinkest in thy mind I caused the theft,
Or breathest such a whisper in the ears
Of those who give thee shelter—mark me, I say;
Thou knowest me!

AUGUSTA. These many years of suffering and of sorrow
You've mocked my hopes, which trusted that he lived!
A father's tender love cheer'd my lone heart,
And painted happy hours in store for me,
When my sweet boy should bless his mother's arms.
What you have been, since lord of this domain,

Withheld from him whose right you feel it is,
I need not now remind you.

REGINALD. Leave me, I say,
This insolence shall cost you dear.—Who waits?

A violent storm, thunder.

Enter Philip.

REGINALD. Turn this distracted woman forth to ro am
Beyond the utmost bounds where I command;
And, at your peril, see that no one dares,
Of those dependent on me, to give aid
Or harbour to her.

AUGUSTA. The storm is fearful,
I am far from home. Then let me beg
One night for pity!—I'll ne'er trouble more.

REGINALD. No, not one night!

AUGUSTA. Then take my last farewell,
But in your dying hour remember me!

SCENE II.—*A wide, wild heath. Night. A violent storm. Enter Augusta alone.*

AUGUSTA. Why, cruel Fate, have my sad, sorrowing days,
Been lengthened to this hour? And is my breast

A mark to meet thine arrows for a pastime?
In joy and peace my early years were spent;
But now o'erwhelming ruin closes round me.

In such a storm, to turn me from his door!
Alone, and unprotected from its violence!
His brother's child, whose infancy he fondled!
The meanest beggar, in the vilest rags,
His menials would have sheltered with compassion.

My child! my orphan boy! the thought of thee
Brings madness!
Cradled in luxury, thy beauty grew
Expanding like the fairest, tender flower!
Now left in basest want, thou begg'st thy bread,
Abandoned by the wretch who stole thee from me!—
In piteous accents, and with gushing tears,
Thou dost implore a scanty, wretched morsel,
Which thy own vassals would despise to touch!

Oh! hadst thou died, while safe within my arms,
I had been blest.
But these alternate tortures of suspense
Nature can bear no longer!

Let the loud tempest rage with tenfold fury,
'Tis but a mockery to the fiercer fever
That burns within my brain!—

His Angel Form illumes the midnight darkness,
While rays of Heaven enwreathe his beauteous brow!
He beckons me!—I follow! [*Dies.*

Scene III.—*Enter Alzire, disguised as a Moorish lad, attended by a group of villagers and Philip. She sings and plays in recitative on a guitar.*

Alzire. I come from Afric's burning shore;
Tell me thy wish.—Believe my magic power.

I've lingered 'midst the Theban walls,
I've learnt the lore their Priests have taught
In the vast Fane's gigantic halls,
Where Sages inspiration caught.

I've heard the desert lion roar,
Where thirsty wilds no waters lave;
I've seen the vulture hover o'er
The dying pilgrim's sandy grave.

Does Power, does Fame thy spirit warm?
Would'st that to thee the Nations bow?
I know a word, I know a charm,
Will lay the proudest Despot low.

Do Riches every bliss combine?
I'll change to gold what now is lead,
I'll charm the diamond from the mine,
And pearl from ocean's deepest bed.

Does Beauty turn with scornful tone?
Nor heeds thy tears, thy kneeling low?
I'll make her change her haughty frown,
And smile, and list thy fondest vow.

Does Music's note enchant thine ear?
I'll warble thee a tender strain,
Shall charm an Angel down to hear
Such heavenly sweetness breathed again!

ALZIRE *to* PHILIP. I wish to see the master of yon castle.

PHILIP. For what purpose?

ALZIRE. I have a tale to tell him
Which he'll be pleased to hear. Admit me now,
And you shall be rewarded.

SCENE IV.—*A large vaulted room splendidly furnished, having one large Gothic window. Reginald is reclining on a couch. Philip enters.*

REGINALD. What noise and revelry is this I hear?

PHILIP. A Moorish lad, who sings, and plays strange tricks,
Has gathered all the villagers around him.
He begs to be admitted to your presence,
That you may hear his tales. Will you allow him?

REGINALD. No.—I care not for his foolery.—Begone!

PHILIP. He says that his last voyage was from the coast
Of the Brazilian kingdom.

REGINALD. Ha! admit him, and retire.

Alzire enters with Philip. She places herself behind Reginald.

Philip whispers to her,

He loves not cheerful music.

ALZIRE. I have a song will please him.

Philip goes out.

Alzire sings.

High on the stormy cliff sublime,
The Bard will watch the tempest nigh,
And gazing, view the raging main
With sadly mild poetic eye.

So, undismayed by fortune's scorn,
The Sage beholds life's threat'ning sky;
And calmly great, amidst the storm
Fears not to live, nor dreads to die!

REGINALD, (*starting up.*) I know that strain! Who art thou?

After a long pause, during which they look earnestly at each other.

ALZIRE. Have a few years of suffering and of sorrow,
A burning clime, and youthful hope destroyed,
So changed my features, that you do not know me?

REGINALD. Know you?

ALZIRE. Look again.

REGINALD. Alzire!—I know you now,
In spite of this disguise.

ALZIRE. I am Alzire; and should at once have known you,
Though haggard looks proclaim internal misery.

REGINALD. How have you dared to venture to these shores?
Where is the child? has he returned with you?

ALZIRE. No.

REGINALD. Say, does he live, and where?

ALZIRE. The boy is dead.—He died within my arms;—
And what I took was sacred to his use.
I lov'd him as my own; nor did he want
A comfort or a joy which I could give him.
From first to last my bosom was his cradle;
Nor could he guess of what I had deprived him.

No greater grief could visit thy fell heart
Than to be told he lives, and comes to claim
The wealth thou now enjoyest.
Had you been earnest in the orphan's cause,
I could not have concealed him. But you crush'd
Inquiry in the bud.—Whom should I fear?

His mother and her father both are dead.
My silence is thy safety, for I know thee!

REGINALD. What then has brought you here?

ALZIRE. To learn the fate of her whose peace I blasted.
And that resistless impulse which impels
To see again the haunts we once have lived in.

REGINALD. Do you not dread the penalty your crimes
Have merited?

ALZIRE. My crimes! what crimes? Revenge in me was virtue!
These eyes beheld a dying mother's pangs
Beneath the lash. By order too of him
Who called himself my father!—At his feet
I knelt in vain to save her from the scourge.

In that dread hour I vowed deep, endless vengeance
Against the whole White race;—and I have kept it!
All other thoughts I sacrificed to that.

Ages of guilt, and theft of Afric's sons,
Has Europe long to expiate. While the same
In every mental gift; and with the same
Free choice of good and evil in their conduct,
The sufferings of my brethren are as cruel
As the poor beasts of burthen in your streets.

You know my motive now. I dare avow it.
But what hast *thou* to plead?
Thyself and basest avarice are *thy gods!*

I read thy mind as 'twere a map before me!
Say, art thou happy?

REGINALD. No matter. Take this purse,
'Twill buy thy safety while upon these shores.

ALZIRE, (*throwing it down.*) I scorn thy gift! And were I dying, helpless,
Even at thy feet, I'd spurn assistance from thee.
The cup of life now sparkles at the brim;
Beware the dregs remaining.

SCENE V.—*The avenue. Enter Alzire alone.*

ALZIRE. Shade of my murdered parent, hear!
Oh! hear again my solemn vow!
Against the hateful race, still near,
Who traffick in thy country's woe!

Oh! let thy pangs, thy blood, thy death,
Be ne'er effaced from memory's page!
Hear me invoke, till life's last breath,
Deep vengeance on their latest age!

Nerve my too weak, my feeble arm,
To aid thy just, revengeful cause
'Gainst those, whose avarice would disarm
Impartial Nature's strongest laws!

Then, in those beauteous Eden bowers,
Where richest fruit all blushing grows,
Where, 'midst the golden sands and flowers,
A fairer Niger smoothly flows;

Then, the Great Spirit pleased shall call
My soul to meet thee on that shore
Where death and slavery are unknown,
And those who love shall part no more!

SCENE VI.—*A forest. Enter Reginald alone.*

REGINALD. The fruit of anxious wishes, secret schemes,
Is now securely mine. And fixed by fate,
The heritage I coveted so keenly,
No rival can dispute. What have I gained?
But days long unenjoyed, and nights of anguish!

How vainly do we calculate for ourselves!
Oft what we most have wish'd for proves our bane,
Even when not wrongly gained. But how much more so,
If baser and unlawful means are used!

How often have we blessed the friendly star
That has denied what once we prized most highly!

Oh! that I could recall the happy hours
Of innocence and peace! Oh! that I ne'er had left
The clear straight-forward path, in which alone
We're safe!
But once within the labyrinth of guilt,
One crime leads to another; nor can we e'er
Retrace our footsteps, but by restitution,
While *that* is in our power.

The widow and the orphan!
Oppressed, made wretched, and destroyed by me!
The tender boy! the lord of yonder castle!
He now, while gently leaning on my breast,
Might, in sweet childhood's tone, have called me "Father!"
"His Guardian, and his Guide!"

Sad, desolate, alone, I wander here,
With powers of mind all shattered by remorse;
And conscious talent, which, if well employed,
Had proved a blessing to myself and others,
All wasted, lost, and spent;
While Hatred points her warning, scornful finger.

How different *now* had been my evening years,
How calm, how bright, how honoured in decline,
Had the high gifts which bounteous Nature gave me

Conduced to light and guide the course of those
Whom Heaven was pleased more sparingly to favour!
While lips, though now unborn, approving time
Would yet have taught with gratitude to bless me!

'Midst storm and darkness sets my sun of life!
And the dread morrow drawing near, appals me!

Existence now no more has charms for me;
I only wish oblivion in the grave.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A mountain with sheep feeding on it. Hubert is seen leaning on a rock. He first plays a pastoral symphony on the flute ; and then sings.*

Lightly the shadows stray
O'er the green mountain,
Gemmed in the sunny ray
Sparkles the fountain.

See ! the young lambs at play,
Blithe as Hope's morrow !
Such our youth's early day,
Careless of sorrow !

Scion of Love and Joy,
Lost in an hour !
Why did cruel Fate destroy
Life's fairest flower !

Still in thine angel form
Lisp tender numbers!
Still with heaven's sweetest hymn
Bless my soft slumbers!

SCENE II.—*A cottage with a flower garden in front. The castle is seen at a little distance. Alyne is arranging a basket of flowers, and sings.*

How sweet the tender blush of early morn!
Spangled with silver shines the dewy lawn.
Sweet is the fragrance of the lowly thorn,
When springs the lark to hail the golden dawn.
More glorious far, the noontide summer ray,
When beauteous richly blooms the unrivalled rose!
Then, sweet to trace the forest's devious way,
Where deepening shades invite to cool repose!
Fairest of all, the gentle feeling breast,
By fierce and worldly passion unharassed;
With dove-like peace, a constant, heavenly guest,
The guileless bosom ever blest shall rest.
Oh! may a guardian angel's tender care
Guide my young trembling steps, and point the hidden snare!

Enter Philip.

PHILIP. Thy cheerfulness and gay content delight me!

ALYNE. I envy none;—but oft contrast my lot
With the terrific fate which has o'erwhelmed
The gloomy lord of yon more gloomy mansion.
How sadly changed from what I still remember!
In childhood I have played about his knee;
He then looked kind and happy.

PHILIP. 'Twas seeming all:
I've watched him from his early youth, and knew
His cold and selfish nature.—At that time
No circumstance existed which could call
His passions into play.
They slumbered in his bosom, and awoke
Like the fell adder when in power to sting.
His force of mind was great. And what he wished
To do himself, or to command in others,
Success has always crowned.
But mark the end of talent so perverted.

ALYNE. What'er his crimes have been, his sufferings now
Are dreadful. Many a year
His life has been most wretched. Oft I have seen him
In the late evening hour go forth to wander
In these dark solemn shades; and there remain
Till early dawning morn has driven him home
To shun the sight and speech of fellow men.
Oft have I heard him muttering to himself.
Then would he wring his hands in agony;—nor deemed

That mortal eye beheld him.—Now, alas!
Chained in his cell, his cries appal the ear!
Hark! 'tis his voice!

REGINALD. "Augusta! mercy! pardon!"

PHILIP. E'er since that fatal hour, now ten years past,
When, with the savage sternness of a fiend,
He drove his helpless niece forth from his gate
To die, that stormy night;—no rest, no peace
Has blest him. Wretched in midst of wealth,
Till gloom, and madness, and despair possessed him.

Sometimes his wild remorseful dreams present
The living forms of those he deeply injured.
Sometimes in sullen, silent gloom, he sinks,
And scowls with such appalling, serpent glare,
That I'd as soon encounter the dire spring
Of the grim tiger, in the Eastern forest,
As stand within his reach.

His misery is a just and fearful warning
To the proud, bold career of hardened guilt.
The lash of Furies, and the sting of Scorpions,
Are a mere fable in their pangs, compared
To the dread power of full awakened conscience.

REGINALD. "Mercy! Augusta! pardon!"

ALYNE. Oh! hear—again he calls!
Let me implore compassion for such misery!

PHILIP. The terror of my sight alone has power
To quell the fiercest frenzy of his fever.

SCENE III.—*The same former large Gothic room, but now stript of its furniture, and having an iron grating in place of the window frame. The room dimly lighted. Midnight. Reginald is seen asleep on a bed of straw. He is fettered to the wall near the window. Solemn music is heard; and then a faint voice sings.*

Oh! hear a wretched suppliant's cry!
Oh! hear a widowed mother's moan!
And list the mourner's plaintive sigh,
Who kneeling thus demands her son!

The spirit of Augusta appears after the song, near the bed, and calls.

Awake!—thy last, thy dying hour is come!
Remember me!—Awake!

REGINALD. Oh! dost thou live indeed! and com'st in pity,
In mercy to the wretch who kneels before thee,
Imploring thy forgiveness!—Then 'twas false
Their tale, that thou wert dead!
They said I killed thee,—cruelly murdered thee!

Thou livest still to bless and to forgive me!
Hast found thy child?—I killed him not, thou knowest.
They said that he was dead.—*That*, too, is false!
And now we shall be happy!
My home, *thy home*, is open to receive thee!
Where is thy boy!

I've suffered years of anguish.—I'd have given
The wealth of worlds thus to have seen thee near me,
And heard my pardon from thy tender lips.
But now thou liv'st, and we shall be most happy!
And that fierce jailor—thou wilt guard me from him?
Thou'lt break these galling chains?

Thou answerest not!—Wilt thou not speak and bless me?
Oh speak, Augusta!—speak, and let me hear
Thy voice again!—Come, let me touch thy hand,
And feel thy cheek once more!

SPIRIT. Farewell! [*Vanishes.*

Philip enters, but does not approach.

REGINALD. Then dost thou leave me! thus in misery leave me!
Again to bear the tortures of that tyrant!
Of that remorseless ruffian!—Save me! save me!
Oh! save me from his power! [*Faints.*

Reginald, after slowly recovering.

Am I awake?—the dreadful dream is gone!
This blessed moment of returning reason,
Which tells me what I've been, and what I am,
Assures me of her gentle spirit's pardon,
And bids me die in peace. [*Dies.*

THE END

EDINBURGH PRINTING COMPANY, 12, SOUTH ST DAVID STREET.

THE HEBREW BOY.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE HEBREW BOY.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

BY

MRS LECKIE,

AUTHORESS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL ; STORIES FOR THE YOUNG ;
AND THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

Ali ha ciascuno al core, et ali al piede,
Nè del suo ratto andar però s' accorge,
Ma quando il Sol gli aridi campi fiede
Con raggi assai ferventi, e in alto sorge,
Ecco apparir Gerusalem si vede,
Ecco addltar Gerusalem si scorge,
Ecco da mille voci unitamente
Gerusalemme salutar si sente.

Nudo ciascuno il piè calca il sentiero.

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LONDON: SMITH, ELDER, & CO.

M.DCCC.XLII.

TO THE

MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN HORNER,

MY DEAR FATHER,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH FEELINGS OF THE HIGHEST VENERATION,

RESPECT, AND AFFECTION,

BY THE AUTHOR.

CHARACTERS.

CEVALLOS, a Jew, and Spaniard.

REUBEN, a Jew.

VELASQUES, a Christian, and Spaniard.

JUDAH, a Boy of fourteen years old.

MIRIAM, Niece to Cevallos.

HASSAN, a Moor, and Gardener.

DAN, Servant to Cevallos.

SPAIN.

The scene is first at Seville, and afterwards at Grenada.

INTRODUCTION.

The aim of the Author in publishing the following Dramatic Poem, and "The Power of Conscience," is, besides the hope of their being useful as moral lessons, to suggest to those of superior poetical talent, the idea of composing short lyrical pieces, combining music with action in blank verse, in the style of Metastasio, but in the English language, and which is wanting to the British stage. Original compositions, when of a pure description, are always preferable to translations, if they express the character and manners of the people. They would at least vary amusement;—and the introduction of the Chorus would improve musical talent by the new airs which it would require.

Such compositions would also be the means of bringing back the taste for English, Irish, and Scotch Songs and Ballads, which are combined with such exquisite poetry, but which are so seldom heard in society, being excluded by Italian songs, designed by the composers for the Opera; while the detached songs of Italy can only be done justice to by the natives. From the same cause, any Foreigner venturing to sing an English or Scotch song, never fails to caricature both the music and poetry.

The consequence of such exclusion is, that when a song of our native land is attempted, from the want of practice and neglected instruction, it is sung without expression, which is the soul of all singing.

It is to be wished that Italian companies were more encouraged to visit Scotland, as in *that* manner, their music is heard in real beauty.

THE HEBREW BOY.

ACT I.

Handel's Overture to "Israel in Egypt."

SCENE I.—*A room in Seville. Reuben, a blind Jew, of middle age, is seated alone. He sings and plays on the harp.*

Bright star of heaven, whose cheering ray
Can glad the captive's tedious year,
And point the eagle's glorious way,
Or insect's path, gay, fluttering near!

Yet vain, alas! to me thy ray,
Thus quench'd in darkest, deepest night;
Oh! then, bright intellectual day,
Impart thy higher, moral light!

Now lost to me each lovely scene
Of pensive eve, or early morn ;
No Cynthia's tender, softer beam,
To these sad eyes can e'er return !

Reuben pauses, and then plays a different prelude ; and again sings.

Scion of Judah's Regal Line !
What hope, what fear for thee, combine !

Lov'd child of him for whom the tear yet swells!
Young Minstrel of the high, prophetic lay !
Thy dawn, thy beauteous morning star foretells
The brighter promise of thy perfect day !

Judah enters.

JUDAH. 'Tis strange, my father, that Velasques comes not !
'Tis now a month since he has left us here.
Have you heard nothing of him ?

REUBEN. No.
His manner was so kind, so earnest to me,
That I unburthen'd all my thoughts unto him,
And trusted in his offered, zealous friendship.
He said he knew Cevallos, my lost friend,

And thy much honoured father:—
Affirmed thy father perished in the wreck
From which I 'scaped with thee.—
When cast on Cuba's shore, distress and illness
Long there detained me from our native Spain.

Returned at last to claim thy father's wealth
For thee, Velasques said thy father's brother
Possessed what should be thine;—describ'd him to me
As a stern, heartless miser.
Velasques then advised my quick return
With thee to Cuba, as our claims were vain;
And would be treated by Cevallos' brother
As a gross imposition.

JUDAH. I've better hopes. The orphan of his brother,
And the strong proofs which you can surely bring,
Will force conviction on his doubting mind;
And justice will compel, should he refuse.

REUBEN. I've learnt that now he sojourns at Grenada,
And have resolved to meet him.
We'll leave this place without an hour's delay.

JUDAH. How different must his disposition be
From what you have so often loved to paint!

The kind, the gentle temper of my father,
And most benevolent heart!

Reuben. Yes! *he* was all the proudest heart could wish!
In talent and in judgment how superior!
His liberal mind directed its best aim
To smooth the hatred prejudice creates.

Whene'er distress required his helping hand,
He never asked if it was Jew or Gentile;
His charity relieved, but shunned display,
It soothed the wretched by the way 'twas given.

Oh! how unlike to many of the world!
Who deem all bad that do not think like them,
Profaning mild Religion's sacred name,
To veil their rancorous passions and their pride,
Or hide their love of sway.

And, while they boast a gentle, Christian spirit,
Would burn and torture, if they had the power,
Even those amongst themselves who differ from them,
Were it the slightest shade.

What misery would it banish from the earth,
If sects of every kind, and every country,

Lived with each other in the bonds of friendship!
And, fearless of the bigot's chain or frown,
Asserted bold the rights which liberal reason
Gives equally to all.

JUDAH. How often is the grasping spirit found
In those who brand our persecuted nation!

Thy kindness has to me supplied the place
Of my lost father, of this high Cevallos.

REUBEN. Resemble him, and I am quite rewarded.

JUDAH. Have you e'er seen Grenada?

REUBEN. Yes, 'tis my native town, my much loved home;
My favourite haunts were in the beauteous halls
And gardens of the Alhambra.

JUDAH. I've often longed to see them.

REUBEN. You shall soon.

GRENADA.

SCENE II.—*The interior of the Alhambra ; the Court of the Lions seen in perspective. Velasques alone.*

Still will malignant fortune mock my schemes,
Though ne'er so wisely planned!
Cevallos' wealth, his niece's wealth, herself,
I thought securely mine!
Now will this hateful Hebrew and the Boy
Dash the full cup which seemed to touch my lip.
Just now I saw old Reuben lingering near.
The tale of falsehood which he heard from me
Must since have been discovered.
He little thought the stern, the hard Cevallos,
I pictured to him in the one he sought,
Was the kind, generous father he thought dead.

Cevallos loves me; for his open nature
Suspects no art so deep can live in mine.

'Tis now the crisis of my fate. This hour
The mob must be my tool.
I'll rouse its fiercest, darkest superstition,
Either to take the blind Jew's life, or drag him
Where he shall ne'er be heard of.
The boy will then become an unknown beggar.
This only witness of his birth and rights,
When once within the Inquisition's den,
Will never cross my path.

Let but success crown this day's desperate deed,
Then I defy thee, Fortune!

SCENE III.—*The principal Street in Grenada. A handsome private dwelling at one side; and a garden adjoining. Enter Reuben and Judah.*

JUDAH. This is Cevallos' home.
Will you not rest some hours before you visit
This stern and hard relation?

REUBEN. I think it better that we learn at once
What we may look for from him,
If he will own you,.and yield up the wealth
Which is so justly yours.

JUDAH. Shall I attend you?

REUBEN. No. I'll not risk thy safety in his power,
Until I know him further.
Where shall we meet?

JUDAH. I'll linger in the garden that adjoins,
And there await your coming.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A splendid saloon, furnished in the Moorish style, and having a marble floor and marble fountain in the centre. Pillars all around, and pedestals with vases of flowers between. Frankincense is burning in censers. One end opens to a garden, with a view of the Alhambra. Moonlight. Miriam, a young Hebrew girl, richly attired in a Spanish dress, is seated on a couch. She sings the following Song, and plays the Lute.*

THE VISION.

Now has the burning noontide power
Declined to softer, sweeter night;
And, bathed in dew, each tender flower
Expands the charms that shun the light.

Fairest in heaven's resplendent arch,
The moon her beauteous orb displays;

And silence reigns; and fancy loves
To dream of past eventful days.

Lo! forth from Alhambra's portal wide
What shadowy forms, in martial lines,
With banners waving, warriors ride,
And high the Crescent o'er them shines!

In turbaned pride, and gemmed cymar,
With burnished arms, how fierce, how bright!
Eager they seek the Christian war,
To conquer, or to die in fight!

The shades have past! What plaintive wail
Does midnight hear? What shrieks of woe!
What funeral dirge sighs in the vale!
And hopeless weeps the Crescent low!

Sad ruin frowns within the walls
Where once the marble fountain played;
The bat usurps those splendid halls
Where once the beauteous Harem swayed!

Enter Hassan.

Hassan. There is a boy of gentle look and manner,

HASSAN. Health to thee, lady, and the fairest dreams!
Humbly I offer you this little gift,
An alabaster box, which holds within
The sweetest scents of Araby the Blest.

MIRIAM. I thank you, and accept it.
Do you still purpose soon to leave this place?

HASSAN. Yes. At the Moslem Court I there can live
Without disguise, in safety.

MIRIAM. If not too painful to your feelings, tell me,
What is the cause that makes you leave your home?

HASSAN. Base avarice, and religious persecution.
The wealth my sire possessed, the envy raised
Of Christians, soon to seize his lawful gains;
And to enforce their power and hide their aim,
They veiled it under their Religion's cause,
That useful mask for those who act most basely.

Knowing full well my father's upright mind,

They dared not offer *him* the insulting choice,
" Conversion, or the Stake !"

Conversion, too, to what?
Say, do the histories of times remote
Give a more direful picture to the view,
When dwelling on the atrocious games and shows
Exhibited in Rome's vast Amphitheatre,
Than the revolting sights which Christian Spain
Displays before her hardened population?

Or can they prove the murderous sacrifices
Of the dark unenlightened Mexican,
Whose native rights and reign, and beauteous soil,
Spain's savage hordes subdued, exceed the rites
Now practised in this Land?

In every clime, whatever the Religion,
Even where the Bigots dare not chain the p erson,
They seldom fail to fetter human thought,
Worst tyranny of all !—And blight, as with
A pestilence, all happiness, and innocent enjoyment.——

The Inquisition doomed my wretched father
To suffer by the Fire!

My helpless mother, and her infant babes,
Driven from the home, the husband whom she loved,
In anguish and in misery, sunk beneath
The anticipated horrors of his death.

The poor untutored mob does not alone
Enjoy the pangs of suffering humanity,
But the high, proudest Magnates of the land
Rush to these sights of torture. And still worse,
Those, whose creation and whose powers were given
To soften and to soothe our rougher sex,
And with the trembling, heav'nly tear of pity,
To pour the balm of sympathy o'er woe;
Even *they* are found, unblushing and unfeeling,
To sanction by their presence such fell scenes!
Their very sports are savage to this day!

My father then had perished; but Cevallos,

Untired in zeal, with well-directed skill,
Aided his most miraculous escape
From their insatiate cruelty.

After long toil I traced him out at last
On Afric's burning shore. I came in time
To watch him, tend him, cheer his broken heart,
And hear his dying accents bless his son!

I then returned, with grateful, deepest feelings,
To thank that friend whose goodness saved my father,
And also take a last, a mournful leave
Of my loved home, still dear, though mine no more;
Our earthly Paradise, our own Grenada,
To every Moorish heart a second Mecca!

Miriam. Cevallos will for ever be thy friend;
He never will forsake thee.

Hassan. There is a boy of gentle look and manner,

Now wandering in the garden.
He seems a stranger to these parts;—looks sad;
But yet most sweetly sings.
He takes much interest in our Moorish story,
And knows our pretty ballads.

MIRIAM. Bring him to me. His voice will aid the chorus.

Hassan goes out, and returns with Judah.

The Chorus enters; a number of very young girls, attired in white, and with chaplets of roses on their heads, and baskets of flowers on their arms. They strew the flowers at the feet of Miriam, and then stand in a semicircle opposite to her. She offers a harp to Judah, who places himself near her. The Chorus then sings.

The music must change with every singer.

First of the Chorus, accompanied by the Violoncello.

Oh Lady! turn a gentle ear,
And list thy people's plaintive sigh;
Nor stern deny the tender tear
That fairest shines in Beauty's eye!

Though rich those pastoral mountains swell,
Far dearer Gilboa's mournful hill !
Though deep their stream's unfailing well,
Far lovelier Jordan's sacred rill !

No more the Prophet proud beholds
A thousand tents the vale adorn ;
Nor sees the trembling foe, aghast,
The Couching Lion's fearful form !

Three of the Chorus.

Now sad Palestia views dismayed
A desert where the harvest smiled ;
And where the flock and shepherd strayed,
The fierce Hyæna finds a wild.

Judah, alone, with the harp.

Oh ! could her sons the Tyrant spurn,
And free the children of her soil !
That high reward would full return
The Patriot's aim—The Patriot's toil !

A prelude on the flute, imitating the notes of the Nightingale—the verse to be sung by the youngest of the Chorus alone, accompanied with the flute.

The fragrant Rose of Sharon's sweet perfume
Would breathe, where now the stony valleys spread;
The vine, the olive, beauteous, richly bloom,
Where now the arid thistle rears its head.

Two of the Chorus, and a Violoncello.

Though sunk in tears, in grief, in woe;
Though bound in captive chains, and low,
Still does our heart, our bosom glow;
We hail our Star that will return
Through dark, through deathlike gloom!

The whole Chorus and Judah.—Miriam rises and sings, accompanied by the whole Orchestra.

Then, quenched the torch of vengeful ire,
And bright in Day's meridian fire,
While cloudless beam
Fair Zion's skies!
Our Foes shall see their hope expire;
Our Tribes shall wake the Choral Lyre;

" Sacred to all,
Blest Salem, rise !"

The Chorus goes out, leaving Miriam and Judah alone.

MIRIAM. If friendless and deserving you need aid,
The generous, kind Cevallos will assist you.

Judah aside.

Cevallos kind ! Cevallos aid the friendless !
Can this be the Cevallos of Velasques ?

MIRIAM. Whence this surprise ?
Cevallos will be shortly here.—I see him.
Retire into the garden till I call thee.

Judah goes out.

Enter Cevallos.

MIRIAM. My father ! why this sadness on thy brow ?

CEVALLOS. This is the birthday of my long-lost child ;
And each revolving year renews the pangs,
The agony I suffered in that shipwreck.

I saw my faithful Reuben grasp my boy,
And bear him up above the raging waves;
Struggling he reached a boat. While clinging to it,
The savage sailors drove him off with violence;
And said the loss of all the Christian lives,
And of the vessel, had alone been caused
By having Jews on board. The wat'ry grave
O'erwhelmed my child and friend. They rose no more.

A ship, then bound for Spain, by chance came near,
And saved the few survivors from the wreck.

Since then, thy more than filial care, thy love,
Has cheer'd a life, that else had sunk in sorrow.

MIRIAM. Oh! do not name the little I have done!
What would my orphan state have been without thee,
My Guardian, and my Guide!

There is a boy now lingering in the garden,
A stranger to these shores.
He seems to suffer from some secret dread.
I promised you would hear him. May I call him?

CEVALLOS. Yes, I will hear him now.

Miriam goes out, and returns with Judah. Cevallos observes him in silence, and then speaks.

Cevallos. Whence art thou ? speak !

Judah. Spain is my native land ;
My last ten years were spent on Cuba's shore !

(*Cevallos starting.*) On Cuba's shore !

A loud shouting of people is heard from without.

(*Cevallos calls aside.*) What rioting is this ?

Dan, who enters.

The mob, with hooting, and with cruel blows,
Are dragging to the Inquisition's vaults
A blind old Jew, a brother of our tribe.

Judah. Oh ! 'tis my father, my beloved Reuben !
Save him ! oh ! haste to save him ! [*Runs out.*

Miriam. Let thy respected name, thy power, thy wealth,
Come forth to save this helpless, injured being,
From the dread Inquisition's direful fangs.

CEVALLOS. Reuben! what ties does that loved name recall!
Yes! I will haste to save thee! [*Goes out.*

Reuben is brought in, supported by Cevallos and Judah. They place him in a chair.

CEVALLOS. It is himself! though blind and sadly altered,
Reuben! my earliest, my most faithful friend,
Know me, thy own Cevallos!

REUBEN. Cevallos! dost thou live? Saved from the wreck,
How many years of suffering and of sorrow
Had both been spared, could I have known you lived.

CEVALLOS. Does my child live? where is he?

Reuben, who places the hand of Judah in that of Cevallos. Judah kneels.

Judah, give me thy hand.
Receive him now; Cevallos, 'tis thy son.

Cevallos, to ~~Reuben~~ Judah.

My boy! my long lost treasure!

[*To Reuben.*] How can I ever thank thee for this gift!
Saved by thy love from death, and thus restored.

Reuben. Thy generous kindness in my early life
Saved me and mine from wretchedness and want.
I am the greater debtor. Knowest thou Velasques?

Cevallos. Yes! I know him well.
I saw a savage ruffian aim a blow
At thy defenceless head. I struck him down.
But when a mask fell from his dying features,
With horror I beheld him,—'twas Velasques!
I guess his motive now; but 'tis defeated;
And punishment has quickly overta'en him.

Reuben. His aim against my life has been successful;
The blows, the threats of the infuriate rabble,
Have snapt the feeble thread which held me here.

Cevallos, who kneels, and supports Reuben.

Oh! do not talk so! rest will, I trust, restore thee,
My home, my wealth, my heart shall be devoted
To glad with peace and joy thy sacred years.
My children shall be thine. Thy boy, thy own,
Thy Judah still shall fondly call thee "Father!"
Oh! do but live to bless us!

Reuben, putting his hand on the head of Cevallos.

I live to bless thee now.
May a long life of happiness reward
Thy constant aim to glad the hearts of all!
I die in peace thus near thee.

Judah, apart to Cevallos.

That ruthless mob has murdered him. I fear
Thine aid has come too late.

Reuben. Judah, my child, and now my happy boy,
Take thou my harp. Awake my favourite hymn,
The solemn, sacred strain, and thy sweet voice
Will lull my spirit sinking into rest.

Judah sings, and plays on the harp.

Star of lost Israel's sacred hill,
I hail thee, Zion, from afar!
Thy exiled, weeping children still,
Still look to thee, their Hope, their Star!

Yet does the harp, with dying strain,
Respond our sad, our mournful tone!

Still, as of old on Shinar's plain,
It echoes back the captive's moan.

Shall e'er that morning gild our land,
When bright in Syria's glorious ray,
Thy children in thy courts shall stand,
And bless their Father's sacred clay?

Eternal Justice yet shall rise
To guard our right, our race, our reign;
And nations round, with joyful eyes,
Shall see lost Zion live again!

During the music, Reuben appears to revive; but at the conclusion of the Hymn, he sinks gradually down, and expires in the arms of Cevallos.

The curtain falls at the conclusion of the Hymn, but again rises, when the Chorus appears, who sings Handel's Chorus, "The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea," accompanied by the whole Orchestra.

THE END.

EDINBURGH PRINTING COMPANY.

THE STEPMOTHER.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

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BY

MRS LECKIE,

AUTHORESS OF THE HEBREW BOY; POWER OF CONSCIENCE; THE VILLAGE SCHOOL; AND STORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

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TO

MISS JOHNSON,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, 4, STAFFORD STREET.

CHARACTERS.

HUBERT,
LIONEL, a Boy of fourteen years, } Sons of Sir Edward Osborne.
ISABELLA, the Daughter of Sir Edward.
LADY OSBORNE, their Stepmother.
AUGUSTUS.

The Scene is in Scotland.

THE STEPMOTHER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.— *The sea-shore. An extensive Castle, on a high rocky cliff, is seen at a little distance close to the sea ; and near the top of the building a small grated window is seen. Lionel is gathering shells in a basket.*

He sings the following Verses.

Should joy light thy rosy smile,
Sweet girl, believe me,
Thy bliss would my care beguile,
Why, then, thus leave me?

When grief wrings thy tender heart,
O! still believe me!
No charm could then tempt to part;
Could I deceive thee!

Thy love, in soft infancy,
Cradled me near thee;
Thy song, my youth's early sigh
Lulls, when I hear thee!

In life be our joys the same;
Happy when near thee!
In death may one grave contain,
Then thou'lt ne'erleave me!

He pauses, and after a little time, he sings Purcel's Song of "Mad Bess."— at the conclusion of which he goes away.

Enter Hubert and Isabella.

Hubert. Grieve not, my sister, that I now must leave you.
My home, you know, has long been hateful to me.
In a short time, I trust I shall be able
To bid you welcome to a brother's roof,
And place poor Lionel where he shall be happy.

I should have wished to have remained in Scotland
On your account and his; but marriage soon
Will free you from our Stepdame's grievous thrall.

Isabella. I could have borne with patience her severity,
In the sweet hope your kindness and protection
Would end my slavery in a few short years;
But the cruel sufferings of the unhappy boy,
Whom I could neither rescue nor defend,
Have made my life most wretched.

His gentle disposition and affection,
To a kind heart had made the task most easy
To aid his weakened mind and feeble frame.

But stern, unfeeling harshness, constant mockery,
Have not alone destroyed all hoped improvement,
They shake his trembling nerves with fear-like madness.

Hubert. My frequent absence kept me ignorant of it.
You should have told me, and informed my father.
Does he not know the truth?

Isabella. 'Twould be in vain to tell him. Lady Osborne

Would soon unsay it all; and he believes her;
Sees as she pleases, as she pleases, hears.
Besides, he is so cold, so distant to me,
I have not resolution to complain.

All his affection towards me she destroyed;
Nor in his children can she bear a rival.
Her tyranny has made my duties odious,
From the harsh way they always were enforced.
I am subdued, and tremble in her presence;
And only happy when I do not see her.

No principle of justice or of mercy
Would stop her where her interest directs.

Hubert. 'Tis strange that one of manner so repulsive,
With features that can awe, but not attract;
Devoid, too, of the softness that so charms!
Should hold such fascination o'er a mind
So moulded, so quick-sighted, as my Father's!
For though he now is stern and most unkind,
I well remember him in early life
All gentle and indulgent; most impartial:
Till this fell tyrant won his heart and hand.

Isabella. The unfailing influence of talent,
Combining with a reach of female art,
Which you can scarcely guess at, is her power.
Endowed, too, with persuasive, honied eloquence,
"Which makes the worse appear the better reason."

She can assume all softness when she pleases:
Nor does she ever venture to display
Her fierce, bold nature in Sir Edward's presence,
For then, she knows, her influence would end.

Before the omnipotence of superior talent,
Whoe'er possesses its resistless power,
All other charms will quickly bow and yield to.
But when this rare, high gift becomes a scourge
To those within its sphere, and not a blessing,
Severe calamity will then avenge
The double guilt to Heaven, of such perversion.

Hubert. Her punishment, and most just retribution,
Will fall upon her ere she is much older.

Isabella. My father has consented that poor Lionel
Should spend some time with me at my own house.
Poor boy! he loves me much.
His only wish is to be ever near me

Nature has given him one single gift;
He has a voice, whose clear melodious tones
No Nightingale can rival.
His chief delight is music; and he echoes
Whatever song he hears.
The saddest he prefers. And though the words
Are wildly plaintive, yet they always breathe
The feelings of his heart.

He does not know he shall go home with me;
I have not yet rejoiced him with the news.

Lionel enters, with a basket of shells.

Isabella. My dearest boy, I am to leave you soon.

Lionel. But you will soon return?

Isabella. No, I shall live far distant from this Castle.

Lionel. Oh! take me with you! do not leave me here!

Isabella. Should you be happy, then, to live with me?

Lionel. Oh happy! truly happy! will you take me?

ISABELLA. As soon as I reach home I'll send for you.

LIONEL. But do send very quickly!

Lionel sings the following Verses.

Sweet Sister! turn thy gentle ear,
That ne'er was deaf to misery's call!
Oh! list poor Lionel's humble prayer,
Who rests on thee, his Guard, his All!

Lionel kneels.

Oh! save me from their cruel scorn!
From the fierce Stepdame's iron power,
Who threats to dash my feeble form
From the dread sea-rock's battling Tower!

He rises.

For thee I'll find the loveliest gems
That sparkle near great Ocean's bed,
I'll cull sweet buds with tender stems,
To grace thy bower, or deck thy head!

Scene II.—*A terraced garden within the walls of the Castle. Isabella is seated alone. She sings the following Verse, and plays on the lute. Twilight.*

As the far wandering Pilgrim burns,
And hails his home of promised rest,
The rainbow Dove of Peace returns,
And nestles in my sheltering breast!

Augustus enters.

Augustus. My Isabella!
I heard thine Angel voice, and blest its tones!

To-morrow we shall leave this gloomy Castle.

A beauteous bower is ready to receive thee;
And ample wealth, at thy command, shall bless
Thy generous heart with power to aid the helpless.

A husband's tenderness shall soon restore
The cheerfulness which best becomes thy youth,
And purity of mind.

Isabella. I trust, with perfect confidence and hope,
My future years to thy long-tried affection;
Nor should a thought of sadness now be dwelt on,
Could I but know the affection of a father.
For, while he bears himself with such estrangement,
I am not truly happy.
Poor Hubert, too!—driven from an unkind home!
Whene'er a tempest shakes the Castle walls
I tremble for his safety on the sea.

Augustus. I do not wonder at your pain in parting
From one so justly loved, and fond of thee;
But trust me, Isabella, for his sake
'Tis better as it is.

How often do we see the pampered Heirs
Of Fortune squander, in wild waste and folly,
The means which Heaven has lent for other ends?
And in the place of blessing, by example,
Their only use in life has been to warn.

Adversity's severe but useful school
We *all* require to go through.
'Tis *Her* stern lesson teaches us to feel,
And to relieve the sorrows of each other.

"She tames the human breast" to softest pity.
Without her curb we'd think but of ourselves;
Were there no evil no good could exist.

Your brother, by high conduct, will acquire
A name; which, nursed in idleness, he'd ne'er have gain'd.

ISABELLA. If with a mother's tenderness and care,
The orphans of her husband had been reared,
Our Stepdame would have won our hearts, our love;
And mutual happiness had then resulted.

AUGUSTUS. She only holds in scorn such gentle virtues,
As if they are unworthy of her culture.
They are not made for her.
No middling course; no common-place endowment,
Need e'er be look'd for in a mind like hers,
But rather the extreme of good or evil.
I've oft observed her; and have thought she felt
As if through life her powers were thrown away.

Think not, even were she once possessed of all
The eye takes in from the most lofty mountain,
'Twould satisfy her restless, craving wishes.
Had she an Empire, it would soon be valueless;
And new desires would spring up in her bosom.

There is a grandeur and a daring energy
In her bold, fearless intellect.
She seems as if originally created
For something greater, better;
And destined for a higher sphere of action.
But now misplaced by circumstance and fate,
She is a bane, a blight, to all around her.

I'll shortly find the means to unmask this Fiend,
Remove thy Father's prejudice,—restore
His lost affection to his injured children.

Scene III.—*Twilight. A Gothic chamber in the Castle. Lady Osborne enters alone, in deep mourning.*

Lady Osborne. Now bounteous Fate has crown'd my anxious wishes.
The cloud that hung betwixt the Sun and me
At last removed for ever; and kind Fortune
Has made my child the Heir of these domains.
The deep sea hides the eldest hope of Osborne!

The maniac Boy, the fool, is set aside.

The Sister, too, the rival of my daughters,
Is wedded; and no more an inmate here.

By splendid marriage to promote the rank
Of my own offspring, is my chief aim now.
The wealth their Sire possesses, all must centre
In me, and in my children.

But I suspect this Howard, Sir Edward's friend,
Who came so lately, unexpected, here.
I fear he knows too well the real truth,—
My hatred of the Orphans.
My husband's usual confidence in me
Seems changed since Howard came.
They're much together; and their plans I guess.
They're now with Isabella.

Could I once know the purpose of her father,
I have no doubt my art would soon defeat it.

I must have instant access to this knowledge.

Except the feeble Boy, all are now absent.

There is a secret dungeon in the Castle.

A private staircase cut, within the walls,
Gives entrance to the Vault.
'Tis guarded by a strong and ironed board,
Like a portcullis.
A door concealed with skilful, nicest art,
Gives access from the Prison to the Study,
Where I shall find the evidence I want.
I have the key. The evening gloom now shades me.

As she is going, she pauses, and slowly returns.

What strange confusion of the mind comes o'er me!
I feel as if I saw, for the last time,
Familiar objects near me; and that a long,
A last farewell, on th' eve of a far journey,
From which I never, never, should return,
Is veiling them in mist, away from sight!

And now a shivering horror chills my blood!

I seem to stand within the lone Churchyard
Which holds the Monument of Osborne's Line,
With high emblazon'd scutcheon: skulls and bones
In bright heraldric painting;
Its ponderous doors seem yawning to receive me!
And flitting Shades advance and hover near,

The grinning Spectres, with their skeleton arms,
Now beckon me to come within the Vault!

A radiant Angel, in the form of Hubert,
Stands in a dripping shroud!
And while with pallid look he gazes on me,
Points with triumphant finger to the Tomb!

The deep toll of the passing knell of Death
Sounds in mine ears, and, to my shuddering sense,
Announces thus the winding up of all!

What can this mean?
Is it a waking dream, or sudden frenzy?
Or warning to deter my rash resolve
Of visiting the Dungeon?
There the sad captive oft has pined unheard.
And I've been told a Skeleton was found
Within its walls, of some poor wretch who died
Alone, unaided, in that den of misery!

Away with this vain, silly superstition,
Which, in another, I should laugh to scorn.
I'll lose no further time, lest some intrude.

She goes towards the secret stair behind a window-shutter; opens a spring-board, and ascends, and shuts the board. The scene closes.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Evening. A dungeon with bare stone walls and floor. A small grated window near the roof. Fetters hanging from the wall. A large, strong, ironed board is sunk in the wall to the floor. A key is seen in a pannel. Lady Osborne is on the floor, alone.*

Lionel is heard singing at a distance.

"Oh! save me! save me!
Sweet Sister! dearest Isabella, hear!
Oh! save me from their cruel scorn,
From the fierce Stepdame's iron power,
Who threats to dash my feeble form
From the dread sea-rock's battling Tower!"

LADY OSBORNE, (*rising.*) 'Tis Lionel's voice I hear. My feeble cry has not the strength to reach him.

And if it had, he'd fly the dreaded sound,
With trembling terror!

Poor child! no wonder that he fears me thus!
I little thought the time would ever come
When this weak boy, whom like a worm I crushed;
Whose streaming tears my harshness often forced;
Whom my fierce threatenings threw, oft kneeling low,
Even at my feet! Ah! little thought I *then*,
The day of retribution would revolve,
When he alone could save my wretched life,
And shield me from these agonies I suffer!

Lionel sings.

"In her thought is as great,
Great as a King!"

Lady Osborne. His wild and maniac Song
Sounds in mine ears like my own funeral-knell!

His shriek heard in the howling, furious gale,
Seems, to my guilty conscience, like the Voice
Of an Avenging Spirit, sent to wreak
The Orphan's wrongs on my devoted head!

No menial hastes to free me!
No friendly hand comes near to moist my lip,
And cool this raging fever!
Mercy, mercy, heaven! [*Faints.*

SCENE II.—*Evening. The court before the Castle. Lionel enters and sings.*

Caught in the hunter's deadly snare,
See the fell She-wolf's dying pangs!
The lamb, the kid, now sportive share
The verdant mead, nor dread her fangs!

The unerring bolt hath swiftly pierced
The Eagle pouncing from above;
The trembling, tender Dove now hears
Her rescued mate's soft note of love!

Though wildest storms of thunder crush
This gloomy Castle's haughty Head,
The beauteous dawn again shall blush,
And bless the Shepherd's lowly shed.

Auspicious Hope shall bring the Morn,
The rosy hours shall lead the Day,
Which, though obscured by midnight storm,
Through tempest darts the heavenly ray.

Scene III.—*Midnight, and obscure moonlight. A Churchyard, with a large handsome Monument in the centre, with a scutcheon in front; and the doors of the Vault wide open; grave-stones all round. Spectres are seen to flit to and fro, out of, and into the Vault. They chant the following Verses in a faint, suppressed tone, like an echo.*

First Shade.

Prepare the shroud, the pall, the bier;
The King of Terrors rears on high
His Dart to strike! I see him near!
I hear her gasping, struggling sigh!

Second Shade.

Inclosed within Cyclopean walls,
Thy feeble moan shall bring no aid!
The gale, the storm, the thunder's voice,
Shall drown thy cries till life itself is fled!

Third Shade.

Like Fury's hiss,
The surge's lash
Shall laugh to scorn
Thy pangs, thy woe!
And late Remorse,
With rankling tooth,
Shall aid Fierce Famine's deadly throe!

Shade of a Boy.

A cup filled with the Orphan's tears
Shall mock her lip:—her vain grasp tire!
No dew from heaven,—no stream shall quench
Her parching fever's burning fire!

Shade of Hubert.

I come from Ocean's cavern'd gloom,
To hail Thee, Tenant of the Tomb,
Whose hand hath cut, before my time,
My thread of life, in early prime,
While yet that life was May!

No husband shall with love, though vain,
Support thy head, and lull thy pain,
And stop the arrest of Death!
No child with anxious, soothing part,
Shall watch, with mourning, bleeding heart,
To catch thy fleeting breath!

Come! haste, and join the Dance of Death!

Behold the Shades in dread array!
They shun the glare of garish Day,
They haunt Night's blackest noon!
List! hear their whisper's voiceless "Hush!"—
They fly the light, the morning blush;
In myriads, see! grim Spectres gleam,
They love no cheering, gladdening beam!

Chorus of all the Shades. They chant in a solemn, low, lugubrious tone.

No hand can stay Thy doom,
Or save from Death's tremendous power;
Thy doom is fix'd, This Fatal Hour!

ALL HASTEN TO THE TOMB!

The Spectres continue to flit about a short time, while a funeral bell is tolling. The scene then closes.

Scene IV. *and last.—Lady Osborne's Prison, midnight. A violent storm. She is kneeling on the floor.*

Lady Osborne. Three dreadful nights!

Poor Orphans! you are now at last revenged!

The brave young Heir, whose high and generous mind
Would have reflected honour on his name,
I banish'd from his home! My stony heart
Rejoiced and triumphed when the ocean hid
His loved and mourned remains!

Isabella! Thy father's harshness
I goaded. I destroyed his love of thee!
And with a grasping avarice I grudged
The dower thy legal right and virtues claimed!

The gentle boy, whose meek and timid spirit
Required each tender, kind, and soothing care,
I drove by terror to the brink of frenzy!

My children! hear your wretched mother's moans;
She now expires within a living grave!

One little crumb of bread, one drop of water,
The beggar at my gate can surely spare,
And I will kneel and bless him !

[*Faints, loud thunder.*

LADY OSBORNE, (*reviving.*) I raise my head to meet the tempest's rage !

Oh ! that the fork'd destructive lightning's dart
Would strike this withering brain, and smite me dead !
Oh ! that the kind, the friendly hand of death
Would end these pangs, these gnawing, vulture pangs,
This scorching, burning thirst !
Death, death alone, can quench the parching fever
Within my throbbing temples ; and the fire
That sears my sightless eye-balls !

An icy coldness now benumbs all pain.

The yawning monument, the beckoning spectres,
Were then no dream ! I join the grisly band !

[*Shuddering.*

I die! May those severe and lingering tortures
Be a full expiation of my guilt,
And bring blessed pardon to my parting soul!

Dies.

THE END.

EDINBURGH PRINTING COMPANY.

THE GUARDIAN.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE GUARDIAN.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

BY

MRS LECKIE,

AUTHORESS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL; THE HEBREW BOY, &c.

Ah me! what hand can touch the string so fine,
Who up the lofty diapason roll
Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul?
Now rising love they fann'd; now pleasing dole
They breathed in tender musings through the heart;
And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart:
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art.

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M.DCCC.XLIII.

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TO THE

MEMORY OF THE LATE GENERAL MACNAIR,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE HIGHEST RESPECT,

AND AFFECTIONATE FRIENDSHIP,

BY THE AUTHOR.

CHARACTERS.

Lady Clifford.

Clifford,
Jane,
} her Children.

Herbert, their Guardian.

Edred, a Welsh Harper.

Group of Peasants.

The Scenery is in England.

THE GUARDIAN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Westminster Abbey. The interior, where the Monuments are seen. Evening. Moonlight. The organ is heard playing a requiem as the curtain rises. A marble statue of a warrior is seen near the front. When the music ceases, Clifford enters alone.*

CLIFFORD. How solemn, how impressive is this place!
How silent, yet how warning to the soul,
Though in the centre of great Babel's throng!
Whate'er the tumults or the joys of life,
All, all must end in death and in the grave.

How beauteous sleeps the moonbeam on these tombs,
Where rest the glorious Landmarks of our Isle!
The sovereign, statesman, warrior, poet, scholar;
And last, not least, the philosophic sage,
Whose zeal untired consumed the midnight oil,
To stamp on freedom's page man's legal rights;
Or pour the sunbeam of enlightening science
O'er the dark midnight of Cimmerian gloom.

Weighed in the balance of a nation's judgment,
All party feuds dissolved by sober time,
Now stern impartial Justice holds the scale.
And whether self or patriotic love
Has been the Loadstar that has led them on,
The vote of praise or censure that decides,
Condemns or lauds them with unbiassed voice.

Inshrined within her first, most sacred Temple,
Here Britain guards the honoured, deathless ashes
Of her most loved and venerated children.
From the proud regal line of high Plantagenet,
To the untitled Great;—whose constant aim
To shield the helpless and oppressed from wrong,
Claims higher fame than conquering lawless power;
And, save when wielded in defence of Freedom,
Casts into shade the warrior's blood-stained sword.

Now, like the bold and beautiful relief
In which these breathing marbles speak and live,
Though shaded by the darkening clouds of night;
The fame of those who felt man's happiness
Their first great wish, stands out in fairest truth
From the vain trappings of the highest titles,
And tells the world the patriot never dies.—
Preëminently great in various talent,
Each individual mind contained an empire.

Here, in this time-worn, monumental Fane,
Shrouded in dust, in death's cold funeral urn,
What a deep moral lesson do they teach!
Commanding us in tones that will not flatter,
To rein life's high career, before too late;
To pause, and ask ourselves, "What are we doing?"
To think how rapid is our brief existence;
How soon Eternity's o'erwhelming tide
Will sweep us from the scene;—and then, what are we?

My father!
Thy loved, thy mourned remains, now quiet rest
Within this sacred Shrine.
Thy life was spent in contests for our freedom;
And thy last sigh was breathed on glory's field.

A grateful nation consecrates thy deeds
In her recording annals.
Thy statue, raised in marble, tells thy name.
I cannot fail to find it.—
This is the sad memorial of my father. [*Advancing.*

My loved, my honoured sire! may thy example
Be ever present to thy children's mind.
Thy sterling worth, thy firm integrity,
No selfish, sordid passion ever stained.
The friendless always found thee kind and gentle,
But, as the lion, bold to the oppressor.

Unlike the paltry followers of fortune,
Who smile and fawn on those who bask in sunshine,
But leave them when a storm obscures their sky.

How infinitely greater is the blessing
Of thy example to all those around,
Than richest mines which India's mountains hide!

My widowed mother, and my orphan sister,
Live far remote from the proud city's pomp.
They urged my quick return, as Herbert took
A base advantage of his power as guardian.

Clifford goes away.

Voices are heard chanting the following Dirge, in a low mournful tone.

Though struck by death's resistless power,
The Great lay low—the blest by all,
Their fame survives till time's last hour,
When burning worlds in ruin fall.

A nation's tears bedew their grave ;
Her sighs like incense rise to heaven ;
She points to her historic page,
Where live their deeds, in bright example given.

(*The following verse to be accompanied by the organ,*)

Their names on adamantine rock engraved,
In characters of fire, immortal shine ;
While round the image of each sacred shade,
The laurel and the mourning cypress twine.

SCENE II.—*An apartment in London, meanly furnished. Herbert is alone, reading a letter.*

HERBERT. 'Tis well. My dread was vain of his return,
The storm that wreck'd their last, their only hope,
Has brought to me security and rest.

My snares will now entrap them ;
And, like the spider, I have wove a web
From which their feeble struggles ne'er can free them.

These many years of strict, penurious care,
Have realized an ample fund of wealth,
And made me affluent.
But this absorbing, ever grasping passion,
The more it gains, the more it still demands ;
And, like the sea, devouring all that comes,
Is never satisfied, and never full.

This restless, constant, craving thirst for riches,
Is the unceasing, universal cause,
The first, great master-spring of human conduct,
Throughout all ranks of life.

Disguise it as he pleases from the world,
It needs no eagle glance, no cloudless intellect,
To track the motive of man's thoughts and actions,
To this concealed, but most undoubted source;
And none but fools would venture to gainsay it.
Though different means are used to gain their ends,
There is no difference in the spur that goads them.
To wealth all else is sacrificed. All just,
All purer feeling.—
Experience but the more confirms this truth.
My early years, my dawn, my morn of life,
The happy promise of a beauteous May,
Was blasted by oppression—I was poor!

I laugh in scorn, to see those cringing round me,
Who, when in sorrow, and in deep distress,
Refused to move one finger to assist me!—
'Tis past! Their turn will come;
Fortune's revolving wheel brings fearful lessons.

I love to hoard what others grasp to squander
On vanity and folly.
The more my wealth increases, still the more
I feel I then possess commanding influence.
No rank, no merit, no acknowledged talent,
But sinks in dust, if gold does not adorn it.

I'll lose no time in taking all advantage
This death now offers, to extend my power.
I'll see those Cliffords; and, by fear, by threats,
Or promise of immediate, needful aid,
Compel them to resign their all to me.

Thus, like the vulture darting on his prey,
I take a full, a fell revenge on all
Who come within my grasp!

SCENE III.—*A small Cottage in North Wales, on the bank of the Conway, and having a flower-garden all round. A distant view of Conway Castle.*

Enter Lady Clifford in deep mourning, and Jane.

LADY CLIFFORD. Another anxious, tedious week has passed,
And yet he comes not!

JANE. My dearest mother, let us hope the best.
His kind, warm heart, and strong desire to see you,
Will bring him soon, believe me.

LADY CLIFFORD. I do not doubt one moment his affection;
But every day that keeps him from our sight,
Delays the blessing of his much loved presence,
And makes my dread of Herbert's power the greater.

JANE. It much excites my wonder, that my Father
Could e'er have placed such confidence in Herbert,
As to entrust to one of such a mind
The power he now possesses.

LADY CLIFFORD. Your Father's generous, too confiding nature,
Judged of mankind as if like to himself;
And unaware of Herbert's grasping avarice,
Made him sole Guardian in your brother's youth,
Whose inexperience required a guide.

Under pretences which I'm sure are false,
He keeps possession where he has no right.—
I live retired until my son's return;
Who, when he once sets foot on England's shore,
Will then compel this Herbert to resign
The power he now abuses.

Your firm refusal of his offered hand
Has roused his savage and revengeful temper.

JANE. I but the more rejoice at my decision,
Which shews him what he is.
Where such a disposition can exist,
Some other cause would soon have called it forth,
And made my fate most wretched.

But let us not anticipate fresh evil.
I trust he dare not, cannot, offer more.
I'd bear with joy the labours of the peasant,
Before I'd be the wife of this tyrannic Herbert.—
How oft I've felt the blessing of those lessons
You wisely taught me in my early years!
To draw the sources of my happiness
From my own mind and heart.

Who would exchange a quiet happy mind,
Though smarting from the cruel shocks of Fortune,
To be the robber of the orphan's rights,
Though boundless wealth surrounds him!
I'd rather be the inmate of yon cottage,
Than gain an Empire, if obtained by guilt.

We have resources of sweet peace and joy,
Which such a mind as Herbert's cannot value.
We roam at will through these delightful vales,
We climb the mountain with as free a step
As those who are the Lords of the domain.

Kind, bounteous Nature has most amply given
The power to all her children to be happy,
If they would use the means within their reach.
Her works, which to the careless eye appear
Of simple form, give proof of matchless skill;
Of adaptation to their various ends,
And beauty in their finish, which no power
Of human art can ever hope to rival.

How sweet to wander on the shady bank
Of yon romantic stream! where from the rock
In brilliant rainbow hues, or sparkling foam,
Leap the resounding waters.

Or, in the solemn, silent, moonlit hour,
To list the nightingale's entrancing note,
In rich, luxuriant tones of gushing tenderness,
"Tune his love-laboured song."

The summer now has reached its high meridian;
This is the Solstice of the radiant year.

As, yesternight, I strolled through yonder hamlet,
I found the busy youth of either sex
Preparing for the fête this day renews.
'Tis an old rite, derived from heathen times.

They build an altar of gay flowers to Flora;
And choose a Queen, who leads her young companions,
Like Dian and her Nymphs,
They dance and sing around their rustic shrine.

The Queen they now have chosen is a bride,
And is most lovely.

A Harper, who has lately come amongst them,
Attends them with his music. But his strains
The proudest dame in Regal court might hear.
No female power can ever hope to equal
His deep, magnificent, yet mournful voice;
'Tis like the sacred Organ.

How much superior are his simple tunes
To all those tricks and show of rapid skill
That never touch the heart!

His full, melodious chords, with powerful swell,
Or dying cadence, lull the charmed soul.
Recalling tones awoke by airs of heaven,
Breathed on those strings untouched by mortal hand,
The wild Æolian Lyre.

I asked the Villagers to come before you,
That you might view their sports, and hear their songs.
The deprivations of the poor are great;
Their joys, I fear, are few, and far between.
I love to see their harmless, simple mirth.

A group of Peasants enter, and a Harper. One of the girls is attired in white, with a crown of white roses on her head. She leads the other females. The young men follow, bearing a rustic altar, which they place in the middle. A troop of Satyrs enter, with Pan at their head. They all dance a waltz round the altar; and then place themselves on each side of it, and sing the following verses, accompanied by the Harper.

HYMN TO FLORA.—*A Bridal Song.*

Hail to thee, Flora! Queen of flowers!
Thy gifts how bounteous, rich, and fair!
Their beauty decks our summer bowers,
Their fragrant breath perfumes the air!

(*Sung by the Youngest Female alone.*)

The nectar cups that feed the bee,
Where scented woodbines graceful twine,
The snowy blossom of the tree,
The tender clover buds are thine!

Sung by Two Men.

Thy fruits refresh the weary lip;
Thy plants assuage all torturing pain;
Thy shrubs, with softest down, enwrap
The dark-eyed Tribes of Asia's plain.

Altogether.

Accept our gift upon thy shrine,
The altar of our Northern Clime;
Nor scorn the wreath, though poor the bloom
Compared to those that richly braid
Thy Temples, with frankincense paid,
Beneath the burning Line!

Crown, with a never-fading flower,
Our favourite Fair;—and bless her bower
With joy's resplendent rays!
On this auspicious, happy morn,
Oh! be her wreath an emblem worn
Of sweet content, and peaceful days;
A Rose without a Thorn!

Sung by the Bridegroom to Jane.

While airs of heaven around thee breathe,
And roses on thy path are spread,
Soon may the bridal myrtle wreath,
Sweet Clifford! deck thy beauteous head

Pan comes forward alone, and sings.

The woods are mine—the groves of oak
That guard our Isle—in strength arrayed.
The acorn branch that binds my brows
Proclaims the god who rules their shade.

Who at the sight of merry dancing Pan,
E'er from his mellow pipe or beauty ran?

He plays on his pipe, and dances in character, to the tune of

"And the jocund rebecks sound!
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the sylvan shade."

The other Satyrs then join him; and he leads them dancing off the Stage. The Peasants follow.

The Harper remains.

Lady Clifford. I pray you rest awhile.
Are you a native of these rural shades?

Edred. I am. My earliest, happiest years were spent
On Conway's woody shore.

Lady Clifford. Have you been absent long?

Edred. Severe affliction drove me forth to wander
These last ten years of pilgrimage and sorrow.

Lady Clifford. If sympathy and kindness can relieve you,
Inform me, if the task is not too painful,
What are the griefs you suffer?

Edred. The tale will soon be told.
My parents lived a short way from this place;
I was their only child; and every wish
They gratified. Nor did my Father
Require his son to add unto his store.

The only daughter of my Father's friend
Was the first playmate of my childish sports.
She grew in youthful charms. A princely court
Might rival, but it never could excel,
The bloom, the beauty of my nut-brown maid.
Expression's soul pourtrayed her lovelier mind.

'Twas my delight, and my most anxious care
To aid her opening talents.
Her voice was Music's self;—'twas sweetly plaintive.
All those who listened felt each note she warbled,
Each tender song she breathed.
My harp has oft accompanied her strains.
But when her dying, sad, expressive cadence
Met my enraptured ear—the harp was hushed—
My fingers hung suspended o'er the strings,
In fear to lose one soft melodious tone.

Our marriage day was fixed—the hour drew near
When as a bride she'd grace my rural home.
That morn arose—it dawned upon her grave.
Her young companions wept upon her bier,
And strewed with freshest lilies the green turf
That wrapt the form which had enshrined an Angel.

Struck, as by Death itself, and in despair,
With every feeling, every nerve thus wrenched,
Vainly I struggled long against the blow.

I left my native Land, and sought in travel
To find oblivion of a cureless pain.

Wearied at last, I felt a strong desire
To see again my once loved, happy home,
And haunt those scenes from which I fled in horror

I have returned, unknown and unavowed,
To check inquiry, till I feel more calm.

Lady Clifford. Your secret here is safe
I trust that life has yet in store for you
Long years of peace and happiness to come.

Jane. If not unpleasant to you, may I beg
To hear again your ballad of last night?

Edred. I'm happy in complying.

Edred sings and plays on the harp.

The Pilgrim's Song.

I've sought, 'midst emerald meads and bowers,
Where mightiest Amazonia strays;
I've seen the fount, where deck'd with flowers,
The infant Orinoca plays.

Through peaceful fields, where weeps the dew,
I've roamed, while fragrant Zephyr sighed,
Where fell Pizarro ruthless slew
The Chiefs, who for their Country died.

I've climbed the steep where whirlwinds reign,
Loud, threatening ocean's deepest well;
And where, in sight's unbounded main,
Remotest regions seem to dwell.

Th' eternal snows I lov'd to seek,
That shroud the rocks by earthquakes torn;
I've reached the high volcanic peak,
Whose midnight fires illume the storm.

Now, in sweet Cambria's loveliest vale,
On Conway's bank I'll lay me low;—
Shade of the Bard!—thy deathless Lyre,
Still seems to mourn her Cambria's woe!

For thee, young Floweret, tender, fair,
How bright thy Star! serenely mild!
A radiant Angel's watchful care
Will shield from wrong the Orphan Child

And as yon Orb, with heavenly ray,
'Midst beams of glory seeks the west,
So, honoured in life's closing day,
The Parent's hoary head shall rest.

The Harper retires, as Herbert enters.

Herbert. I see my presence is most unexpected,
And, I perceive, unwelcome—'tis no matter.
Think not I come to fawn and cringe for favour.

Lady Clifford. I find that the forbearance and submission
With which, till now, I silently have borne
Your arrogant and most presumptuous conduct,
Have only made you worse.

Your office as a Guardian was assumed
By your own free consent and will to be so;
But mindless of the charge you undertook,
The next unto a Parent's sacred duty,
To guard your Ward from wrong; which every mind
Of mould upright would always deeply feel;—

You, not alone, are careless and neglectful,
In leaving those who've lost the sure protection
Of a kind father, and a tender husband,
To an unpitying, and a heartless world,
That only values those whom Fortune favours,
But you deny the rights which Justice claims.—
What new oppressive measure brings you here?

HERBERT. I come to tell you, that your fortune's ruined.
Your whole support was owing to my bounty,
That now is at an end. I come to claim
Immediate repayment of my bonds,
But if refused, a prison then awaits you.

LADY CLIFFORD. My son, when he returns, which will be soon,
Will satisfy your just demands on me.

HERBERT. There all your hopes are vain.
The ship, in which he was expected home,
Is wrecked on Cornwall's strand.

LADY CLIFFORD. Oh! But I trust, I trust, my son is safe?

HERBERT. No. All on board have perished.

LADY CLIFFORD. Then take me where you please.—My son! my son! [*Faints.*

Jane to Herbert.

Inhuman, and most savage,
To wring a mother's heart, thus unprepared,
With such o'erwhelming agony!

HERBERT. What claim have *you* on me?

JANE. Your sacred promise of a Guardian's care.—
You never have fulfilled it.

And can you drag your Ward, her widowed Parent,
To the low haunt of the base felon crew?
Oh, spare us!—spare my Mother!

[*She kneels to Herbert.*

HERBERT. You kneel in vain, and shall be humbled more.
In place of sunny fields and flowery gardens,
The dark and loathsome horrors of a Prison
Shall bound your shuddering gaze.—
The officers of justice now are waiting
To drag you both to Jail.
I'll hear no more.—Come! come! this instant come!

(*As he is pulling Jane by the arm, Clifford rushes in, and drives him back.*)

CLIFFORD. Villain! release thy hold.

LADY CLIFFORD, (*reviving.*) My son! my Edward!

[*Falls into his arms.*

HERBERT. Clifford!

CLIFFORD. Yes! Clifford lives to end thy cruel sway.
Begone!—profane not with thy hateful presence
The pure and sacred joy which now awaits us.

HERBERT. Yet hear me speak.—

CLIFFORD. No, not one word!
With other witnesses than these now present,
Justice will soon compel you to restore
What you've withheld so basely.
And retribution, for your trust abused,
Shall cover you with shame. Begone, I say,
And quit this place for ever!

[*Herbert goes away.*

CLIFFORD. My mother!
Oh! let me hear thy soft, maternal voice,
In tender accents bid me welcome to thee!
No cloud shall shade the evening of thy days;
But peace and joy for ever hover o'er thee.

I feel thy gushing tears bedew my cheek,
Oh speak! and bless thy son!

THE END.

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